

The SCEPTRE



QUEENS COLLEGE
CHARLOTTE, N. C.

VOLUME II

December 1928

NUMBER 1

ROSENBERG'S

DYEING AND CLEANING

Phones Hemlock 4192 and 4193

Plant 921 E. 7th St.



We Make Them Just Like New

NOTE: The Sceptre is indebted to Frances Johnson for the pen sketch of Main Entrance on the cover.

The SCEPTRE

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CONTENTS

The Origin of Christmas—Mary Eleanor Goss-----	3
Three Poems—Louise Babcox-----	6
Happiness—Mary Groome McNinch-----	7
A Fantasie of Youth—Mary Sanders Brookes-----	8
Lights—Kathleen Hollingsworth-----	9
An Old-Fashioned Girl—Lucia Hardin-----	10
Blake, the Lyricist—Julia Boyd Smith-----	12
The First Christmas—Marjorie Wood-----	15
Jugtown—Cornelia McLaughlin-----	16
Disillusion -----	18
In Bethlehem—Kathleen Hollingsworth -----	19
Shadowland—Lucia Hardin -----	20
Christmas Eve—Katherine Elizabeth Smith-----	21
Poem—Mary Sanders Brookes-----	24



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The SCEPTRE

VOLUME II

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NUMBER I

The Origin of Christmas

By MARY GOSS

IT was Christmas Eve all over the world and the Jacksons, tired, but happy, were gathered about the huge open fire, admiring the lovely tree standing in all its radiant glory in its usual corner of the living room. The last shiny star topped the lofty branches, and strands of bright lights shone through the sparkling tinsels and comic toys. About the base, stacks of snowy white packages of mysterious sizes and shapes bound with bright Christmas ribbon and fancy seals, awaited the time when eager hands would rob them of their beauty, and disclose the treasures within.

Despite the excitement of the occasion, little Katherine's curly head was nodding suspiciously close to her mother's shoulder; but determined to await with her big sister and brother, the time when the clock over the mantel would strike the mid-night hour—and the dawn of another Christmas day! She blinked her heavy eyes and looking sleepily up at her mother, asked, "Mother, when is the man going to tell us about Christmas?"

"By the way," ejaculated her father, hurriedly folding the evening paper, "We nearly forgot about that, didn't we?" Then turning to the radio at his right, he pressed a small black button and as he moved the dials slowly in search of his station, floods of Christmas music filled the air. As the last strains died away, a pleasing male voice spoke distinctly:

"Friends of the radio audience, we are waiting now for another Christmas day and while we wait, I wonder how many of you actually

THE SCEPTRE

know the meaning of this day. You are saying—of course, it is the celebration of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem’—and you are right, but perhaps you have never realized that our Christmas day has not always been a Christian holiday, but in reality, sprang from Paganism. This is a trifle disappointing to us Christians who love to believe that this one great day belongs to us and that it is ours in which to worship and praise our God—the God of the universe. Still, we must remember throughout that the *Spirit of Christmas* is far greater than the historical origin and exactness of time.

“It is not known exactly when Christmas day originated, but the Romans had, like the other pagan nations, a nature festival which they called *Saturnalia* and the northern peoples had *Yule*; both celebrated the turn of the year from the death of winter to the life of spring—the winter solstice. As this was a wonderful change, the festival, as in our present day, was a joyous one. It began with the Romans on December 17, and lasted seven days. The giving of presents and the burning of candles characterized it. Among the northern people the lighting of a huge log in the houses of the great, together with appropriate ceremonies was a feature.

“One of the first certain traces of the festival is found about the time of the Emperor Commodus (180-192 A. D.) In the reign of Diocletian a churchful of Christians gathered to celebrate Christmas, were burned by order of the Emperor. The birth of Christ was celebrated in May, April and January, by the early Christians. It is almost certain that December 25 is not Christ’s birthday as it is the rainy season in Judea and Shepherds could hardly have watched their flocks by night on the plains at that time. According to many authorities, the present date was not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the habit of the Christians was to celebrate the death of remarkable men rather than their birth. The death of the martyr Stephen and the massacre of the innocents of Bethlehem had been long celebrated when, perhaps in opposition to the doctrine of the Manichaeans respecting the

THE SCEPTRE

birth of Christ, a feast was established in memory of this event in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, as no certain knowledge of the date of Christ's birth existed.

"In the east, Christmas was celebrated on January 6. As told in the Gospel of Luke, Christ was born during the night and therefore divine service was performed in the night of December 24-25. This night was known as the Holy Night. The feasts of the martyr Stephen and the evangelist John were united with it and a feast of three days was formed in Germany. In the Greek and Roman Catholic churches the manger, and the Holy Family are sometimes represented at large, and before them are sung Carols and manger songs, which are musical features of Christmas tide. The Christmas tree has been traced back to the Romans. It went from Germany to Great Britain, and is almost universal in the United States, where the customs of so many nationalities meet and gradually blend into common usage.

"At the winter solstice the Germans held their Yule feast in commemoration of the return of fiery sun-wheel, and believed that during the twelve nights reaching from December 25 to January 6, they could trace the personal movements and interferences on earth of their great dieties, *Odin*, *Betcha* and others. Many of the beliefs and usages of the old Germans and also Romans relating to this matter passed over from heathenism to Christianity and have partly survived to the present day. The use of the Evergreens and the sacred mistletoe decorating churches and homes was plainly borrowed from the Drudic worship.

"Still the question is only partially answered as to why December 25 was chosen for the celebration of the Nativity in preference to any other day. At this time we find Christianity bravely struggling towards the banishment of paganism. By means of the religious plays and the "Manger" songs, Christianity gradually came to the top, and Christmas day became no longer natural delight over the prospect of Spring—"the conquest of the Sun over Cold and Barrenness,"—but pecu-

THE SCEPTRE

liarly Christian Joy in the rise of the Sun of Righteousness with universal life and warmth which the feast set forth.

"The day was set just at the close of the heathen festival and the presents and ceremonies were meant to symbolize the unspakable gift of God—the Saviour.

"And now, my friends, I hear the midnight chimes and I bid you all a very Merry Christmas."

Mrs. Jackson, gathering the limp little body of her sleeping daughter into her arms, whispered a Merry Christmas and left the room. Mr. Jackson, stretching luxuriously, snapped off the radio and motioning to his young son and daughter, crept noiselessly towards the kitchen, leaving them to follow.

Another Christmas day had come and the stockings were yet to be filled.

ADVENTURES

*I tied my wagon to a star,
It turned the wheels so fast and far,
That when I reached my home at last
I found the world had travelled past.*

YOUTH

*I burned my candle at both ends,
And then in sudden fright,
I blew so hard flames went out,
And now I have no light.*

AFTERWARDS

*What is jazz to you and me,
But a ragtime tune to memory?*

—LOUISE BABCOX.

THE SCEPTRE

Happiness

By MARY GROOME MCNINCH

FOR one enraptured moment, Granny Schmulker was oblivious to the biting cold, and then a sweep of wind tore at her shawl, exposing her none-too-thickly clad self to the unruly elements. Hugging her shawl about her the more, Granny turned away, paying tribute in a last backward glance to the beautiful picture—as if fearful of forgetting—she who had learned the picture's every mood!

If only Mrs. Garroty would buy the table cover! It would have been worth more in her younger days, but Granny was getting old. Fifty cents was enough, and a penny extra, to get the picture. By hurrying, she arrived just as early mass began. The beautiful Christmas-eve service over, she almost ran in her haste to get home. Oh! she had bought it and her precious fifty cents lay on the table. Scarcely noticing the stinging air, she hurried up town long before the store should open. Was someone looking at her picture? Well, they shouldn't have it. Oh! only a pale, ragged boy, a poor wretched, cold child gazing, always gazing beyond the plate glass—at a red fire engine marked 39 cents.

The store opened and Granny burst in, intent only on her picture. "Yes, sir, the one over there. That's it." Her gaze wandered past the vase to a dirty, frozen child whose eyes were filled with longing for a red fire engine.

The last spark of regret died from her heart when Peter—for that was the raggamuffin's name—seized the fire engine. It was as if he owned the world. "Oh, Lady, I, I wanted it so much. How did you know? B— but, lady, you wanted that girl's pitcher, didn't you?"

"No, dear; I just thought it was pretty, but not very."

The one superbly happy, the other reflecting that happiness, the two moved down the street, around a corner, up an alley and came upon

THE SCEPTRE

an ash can. Suddenly, Peter searched, kept searching. Then, triumphant, he held up a soiled Sunday picture section. Inside, intact, there smiled up at Granny, her beautiful "Mona Lisa." Carefully she tore it out and together the two hurried back to get a frame. Went her last eleven cents, but one.

The air was warmer now, and the two happy souls, stepping again into the street, heard the chimes ringing—and truly for these two the chimes told a story, for they played "Joy to the World."

A Fantasie of Youth

*On a gold guitar
With silver strings,
Pierrot played to Pierrette;
The moon lent his glow
To Pierrot,
To shine the hair of his fair coquette.*

*By her window high,
Stood Pierette,
And smiled at her lover there below
While a nightingale,
In the dreamy vale,
Sang to the music of Pierrot.*

*The vine on the wall
Made a ladder strong,
And Pierette called to her lover low.
The old moon smiled bright
As he sank out of sight,
And left all the world to Pierrot.*

—M. S. BROOKES.

THE SCEPTRE

Lights

ALL over the world there are lights — twinkling gaily, glowing kindly, burning reverently.

Twinkling gaily In the shops happinesses for every age are illumined. Fat, jolly Santas bob up and down and around on improvised shelves; minute Xmas trees, bright with fairy sparkles have an expectant air as they wait for the chubby hands that will soon clasp them as their own, and the childish voices that shiver with ecstasy at this amazing, beautiful season. Feminine foibles come into their own again, and the ambers and dull blues, burnished golds and purples, clear greens and bright yellows, of jewels and trinkets and sweet-smelling things sound their proud note of color.

Glowing kindly In homes shades are up to display wreaths and bells, and the welcome light from windows streams over the white snow and glows in the frosty air. Kitchens are pungent with the odors of spicy plum puddings, crisply browned turkeys, and delectable cakes—treasure troves of every kind of nut and sugary fruit. Fires roar in the stoves with an extra vengeance, mingling the heart-warming sound with the fragrance and the happy bustle.

Burning reverently It is dark in the cathedral but for the tall wax candles that burn before the altars; their pointed flames are consecrated fire. In their sweet radiance the faces of the Madonna and the Holy Child glow in a beauty beyond understanding Once above Bethlehem a bright light shone. A star shone above a manger where a Baby lay. All over the world there are lights, and each tiniest point burns because of that First Light, that star that hung in its radiance above Bethlehem. A star shone over Bethlehem. All over the world there are lights.

—K. B. H.

THE SCEPTRE

An Old Fashioned Girl

*"I'm tired of these flappers," I laughingly said,
As I looked the new moon in the face.
"I'm tired of their joke, their jazz, and their smoke,
I'm tired of trying to keep pace.
I'm going to find if I have to go
Clear to the end of the world,
The finest thing a man could find,
Just an old-fashion girl."*

*The moon looked down and winked at me,
"You'll never find her," he said.
"You can search the world from end to end,
But the old-fashioned girl is dead."
So I searched the world from end to end,
But all to no avail.
And the moon called down from up above,
"Sure, I told you a truthful tale."*

*But one day when I was lonesome and sad,
And my heart was filled with pain,
For I had come to believe that the moon was right—
That my search was all in vain—
I found the girl; the girl of my dreams
In a garden where roses clime,
And in the air was a faint perfume
Of lilac, larkspur, and thyme.*

THE SCEPTRE

*It was a night just made for lovers
All silver and shimmering gold,
And cupid shot an arrow
As in the days of old.
I found her in an arbor where clematis crawled
And wisteria gracefully hung.
And somewhere beyond in the shadowy darkness
A blue-bird softly sung.*

*Her skin was a creamy whiteness,
Her lips a scarlet hue,
Her hair was as gold as the moonlight
Her eyes a midnight blue.
The moon sent down a greeting
On the brightest of bright moonbeams:
I wish you luck and joy,
You and the girl of your dreams."*

—LUCIA HARDIN

THE SCEPTRE

Blake The Lyricist

By JULIA BOYD SMITH

MEN said that he was mad, this poet who with his simple elf-like verses held so modest a place among the writers of the day. There was no place in their world for missionaries. Yet it is from the world of fancy and imagination, in which he lived, that Blake derived that simplicity, clarity and imaginative quality for which he is remembered. Visions are of some value after all! His work holds a unique place in the history of English literature because of its extraordinary independence of contemporary fashion and this very singularity gives a marked interest to the study of the poet's career. In the double capacity of poet and painter he showed not only the simultaneous practice of the two arts, but their combination—a thing not done before. This peculiar process of publication cannot, of course, be held to affect Blake's claim as a poet, but it is nevertheless deserving of remark because it indicates a certain quality of mind that deeply affected his poetic individuality. To define the poetry of Blake one must find new definitions for poetry for no definition from the works of other poets could express its peculiar quality of lyric thought.

"To sing with the infinite harmonies of rhythm, to move by dim suggestion or appeal with overpowering passion directly to the feelings; to present though suffused with emotions or ideas that concern the reason chiefly; to summon before the reader's mind by the 'magic incantation of a verse' exquisite colors and forms; to touch the memory and stir the imagination—this is but a faint description of the art of a lyric poet," someone has said. Blake's genius was essentially lyrical. In his verse there is, if it is to be found in any verse the "lyrical cry" but the voice which utters the cry is one before unheard. Other lyric poets sing of love but Blake sings of forgiveness:—

*"Mutual forgiveness of each vice;
Such are the gates of Paradise."*

THE SCEPTRE

They sing of the brotherhood of men, but Blake sings of the "divine image." He had, one author says, "the simplicity and gentleness of a child" and a but brief study of his poems shows another childish attribute, tenderness. All these qualities combine to give to his poems an air of strangeness and wonder which cannot be obliterated even when he is most troubled.

*"Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"*

The childlike beauty of his poems is entirely free from the awkward lisp of wisdom that condescends. So lyrical is his work that it has the fresh perfume and grace of a flower, a subtle beauty, such delicacy of style that it is easy to believe that he possessed the rare secret by which the loveliness of a scene may be arrested and kept forever within a line of verse. There are few more graceful lines in lyrical literature than,

*"Let thy West Wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes
And wash the dust with silver."*

Or what gives a portrayal of greater tranquility than,

*"The sun descending in the west
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nests
And I must seek for mine."*

I have said already that Blake lived in his imagination. "To me this world is one continuous vision of fancy or imagination," he wrote, and throughout his life visions appeared to him. Of the definite reality of Blake's visions there can be no doubt; no question that, as he once wrote "nothing can withstand the fury of my course among the stars of God, and in the abyss of the accuser." Words were to him not symbols but assumed the force of individual images. As they passed into his

THE SCEPTRE

work they lost the stamp of ordinary currency and became impressed with a device of his own coinage, vivid and eloquent. The difference between the imagination in Blake and in, say Shakespeare, is that the one has a usual imagination and sees an image or metaphor as a reality while the other, seeing it none the less vividly but in a more purely mental way, adds a "life" or an "as." Blake for example in his *To the Evening Star* begins, "Thou fair-haired Angel of evening," thus giving to the star a personality, an individuality of its own.

Blake is the only poet who sees all temporal things under the form of eternity. The key to everything he ever wrote or painted lies in his mysticism. Full of child-like simplicity though his poems may be, throughout them runs the theory of "Divine Immenence" which is in part in accord with the naive wonder which the lines express. According to Webster the doctrine of "Divine Immenence" is "the belief that God is not only the essence of the universe but that in the universe may be found the essence of God." Especially may it be noted in the second verse of *The Lamb* and in the last two lines of *To the Evening Star* we find a beautiful expression of it:

*"The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew; protect them with thine influence."*

According to Blake man was not a product of nature, but an immortal being fallen halfway between the natural and the divine. God, to be sure did not dwell in nature; but He did dwell in man; indeed He had no other habitation. There is a beauty in this theory; the same beauty that belongs to Blake's works. In an age where most of his contemporaries were transcendentalists he received first opposition, then scorn but posterity, while it may not agree with him holds one point of agreement at least; no theory could be more admirably suited to Blake's writing.

The poetry of Blake is a poetry of the mind, abstract in substance, concrete in form; its passion is the passion of the imagination, its emotion, the emotion of thought, its beauty is the beauty of the idea. And

THE SCEPTRE

so he goes through life with perfect mastery of the terms of existence, as they present themselves to him; perfectly happy, wanting nothing as he said, when he was old and poor; and able in each stage of life to express in art the corresponding stage of his own development. He is the only poet who has written the songs of childhood, of youth, of nature years and of old age; and he died singing.

The First Christmas

*I wish the day that Christ was born
I'd seen Him on that wintry morn,
As in His swaddling clothes He lay
When dawned the first great Christmas day.*

*I wish that in a sacred band
I then had touched His tiny hand
That, later by our God, was led
To heal the sick and raise the dead.*

*And would it not have been quite sweet
To humbly kneel before His feet,
And on this Christmas Day as then,
To then have kissed the Baby's face?*

*Oh! May that star shine down on me
That shone upon the shepherds three
And on this Christmas Day as then,
Give "Peace on earth, good will toward men."*

—MARJORIE WOOD.

THE SCEPTRE

Jugtown

By CORNELIA McLAUCHLIN

EARLY in the eighteenth century a number of families from Staffordshire, England, landed at Jamestown at Jamestown and took up tracts of land on the coastal plain of North Carolina. A little later, for purposes of safety, they moved further inland to the part now known as the Piedmont section. Today if you journey far back from the railroad you will come upon a settlement known as Jugtown, and will find descendants of these English pioneers living in log cabins that some author might well use as a stage setting for a Daniel Boone play. For centuries these people have remained here—bound to the spot by poor roads, by poverty, and a proud clannishness that is truly aristocratic. You would expect their life to reflect pioneer life and thought as it was two centuries ago, and it does.

Ten years ago, probably no one except a few North Carolinians had ever heard of Jugtown. Today the name is being stamped on more than a half million pieces of hand turned pottery which is being sold all over the world. Not only that, but pieces of Jugtown pottery are found in many of the great museums of the country.

Jugtown has never been a town. It is simply a convenient name for a scattered rural community set in a pine clearing in the extreme northwestern corner of Moore County. For nearly two centuries the inhabitants of this out-of-the-way spot have earned a livelihood by turning on a kick wheel homely household pottery, such as churns, jugs, and candlesticks.

About ten years ago when Mr. Jacques Busbee, a portrait painter, chanced upon Jugtown pottery it was about to become extinct. The potters who had depended on the demand for the "little brown jug" had found prohibition affecting their market. Those who had in their spare time fashioned what they called "dirt dishes" for wagoners to

THE SCEPTRE

peddle among the country-side found that factory "china ware" had won out in popular favor. Consequently the sons of potters were seeking a living in the factories and cities of which they had heard.

Mr. and Mrs. Busbee, both artists, at once perceived the quality of the ware and they began to preach pottery to everybody they met. They went to Jugtown and found that saw mills and cotton factories had practically absorbed the potters. So these two artists sold their home and came to Jugtown to live so that they might do all in their power to restore the expiring craft.

A few potters were reprieved from mechanical occupations to which by necessity their hands had been laid. Rotting wheels were brought out of sheds and repaired—wheels exactly like those that the first potters brought across the Atlantic. Boys were put to digging the clay whose existence had determined the sight of the settlement.

Mr. Bushee's career as a painter was forgotten in his absorption of watching vessels take form under the supple hands of the Jugtown potters. He saw to it that they did no other work so that their fingers should keep their sensitiveness. The older members of the colony and the children were shown how to model roosters and hens, exactly like those in their back yards, out of balls of clay, and pinch pin holes in their shiny red and grey breasts for the sifting of salt and pepper.

Without a commercial outlet, however, the colony could not hope to survive. Jugtown pottery was soon discovered to be without honor in its own state. So Mr. Busbee went to New York and in connection with a restaurant in Greenwich Village established a pottery shop. Here he found ready sale for the Jugtown ware. Until registered pottery was shipped out of the state nine years ago it had never been seventy-five miles from its source.

Today two kinds of ware are produced in Jugtown—"red ware" and "grey stone" ware. The red ware is really orange, varied in shades from pumpkin yellow to deepest copper, according to the natural clay and the amount of firing. Overfiring causes it to turn an olive green.

THE SCEPTRE

Grey stone ware is from a different clay and shows brown markings on the parts nearest the fire.

Mr. and Mrs Busbee are anxious to keep the pottery unspoiled as it was in early days, but this is not always easy to accomplish as the potters wish to try their skill at imitating the cheap factory-made china they have seen. Mr. Busbee's idea is to have Jugtown pottery useful as well as artistic.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about this pottery is its close similarity in shape to the pottery of primitive periods in various parts of the earth. One artist says that these potters make a sorghum syrup jar which is exactly like pars taken from the tombs of the Han Dynasty.

In the Jugtown burning ground there is a marker dated 1750. This tall clay marker probably cannot be matched anywhere in the United States. Since there is no stone available where they live, it has fallen to potters of the settlement to devise memorials which are made of the same clay in which the Jugtown folk are buried. Before these memorials are put to dry, inscriptions are scratched in the clay.

In Jugtown, art, life and death are all served by the potter's wheel.

DISILLUSION

*You offered me a diamond drenched in wine—
And I refused it for a sober pearl.
One night as I leaned over a sparkling cup,
I dropped my jewel in the liquor's swirl.*

*I saw my pearl sink slowly in the glass—
I saw the greedy liquid eat it up.
If I had worn the diamond that you gave
I still would have my jewel in the cup.*

M. S. BROOKES.

THE SCEPTRE

In Bethlehem

*Crystal stars in deep blue skies,
This the dome of Bethlehem;
Just as deep are the blue eyes
Of Mary, mother of the Son.*

*Roses bloom in sweet Judea,
Cattle kneel with shepherd boy,
The noisy throng is hushed in fear
And good men feel an awesome joy.*

*On the hills the shepherd folk,
In radiance of that brightest star,
Blessings merciful invoke
Where the Holy Family are.*

*Into a world of doubtful faith
A gentle little child is born
To tell the Gospel, love on earth,
To bring to peace it's first faint dawn.*

*Reverent wise men, shepherds good
Dusky manger, stable dim,
Stand no more where once they stood
On the hills of Bethlehem.*

*Yet still abide in Bethlehem,
Undimmed by wrong the world has done,
Crystal stars in deep blue skies,
Mary, and her little Son.*

—K. B. H.

THE SCEPTRE

Shadowland

*I believe somewhere there's a shadowland
Where our shadows go to play,
A land that we could never find
Though we search from day to day.
It's a wonderful place of silhouette,
On a background of moonlight gold
A place of youth eternal,
A place where they never grow old.*

*The stars are ever shining,
And there's never any pain,
And the moon hangs high upon the sky
To light up lover's lane.
There are castles on the hillside,
And castles in the dell,
And somewhere the song of a blue-bird,
And the call of a chapel bell.*

*Our grandmothers have gone to the beautiful land
From whence there is no return,
But their shadows will live in this land of song
As long as the stars shall burn.
And so when we, too, have answered the call
That the pipes of Pan shall play
Our shadows will find a home of their own
And to live in, to love in, to stay.
And they shall change the name of this wonderful place,
The land of silhouette,
And they'll name it for us and they'll call it
The City of Lest We Forget.*

—LUCIA HARDIN.

THE SCEPTRE

Christmas Eve

By KATHERINE ELIZABETH SMITH

AFRESH snow had just begun to fall, repainting the world that had become sodden with the grime of day. Cheery voices greeted one another and happy children, holding the hands of timid mothers, thrilled to the sound of Santa's bell, ringing violently in front of the Bon Marche—Christmas—the season of love and good cheer.

Anthony Waring stopped at the street corner to wait for the red light to change. Suddenly a feeling of distaste, an intense longing, came to him. Another year gone—another Christmas come and what with it? Disillusion, disappointment. Nothing he had planned with so much zeal had come to pass.

A tinkling bell, a red blur, and a voice penetrated through the flakes.

“Help the Salvation Army, Sir.”

No answer. His hand automatically went to his pocket and a dollar to the cup.

“Thank you, Sir.”

Still no answer. The bell rang and the light flashed green. He aimlessly strolled across the street, his eyes on a huge Christmas tree adorning the plate-glass window of a jewelry store, his mind on a certain night of last July, when a voice as freezing as this December day, had placed a barrier before him, and a diamond ring into his hand. What a fool he had been! Pausing a moment before the gayly-lighted window his eye fell on a tray of gleaming engagement rings. Quickly he turned and walked away. Glancing down the street he saw a crowd standing in front of a show-window. He sauntered in that direction and gazed idly over the heads of two girls. What he saw caused a quiver of pain. There, in the window, was the duplicate of a suite of furniture he had bought last July. His divan was still swathed in heavy,

THE SCEPTRE

brown wrapping paper. This one was facing a huge artificial fireplace, where hung a bulging stocking. A sleeping child was curled in one corner, his picture book on the floor, and a smile on his face. The tip of Santa's boot could be seen in the chimney.

He walked quickly on.

A tinkling bell, a red blur, a voice again penetrated the flakes.

"Help the Salvation Army, Sir."

He looked up. The voice vaguely disturbed him. It had an artificial ring. The hood, however, was pulled closely over his face, and since he had now renounced all interest in girls, he dropped fifty cents into the cup and passed on.

Children! Oceans of children! He had never seen so many. Was the whole world made for them? Every window he passed was loaded with toys and rimmed with tiny infants, staring longingly at the dazzling array.

Turning his eyes to avoid them they met those of a girl standing on the curb. She smiled.

He crossed the street.

Ye gods! Would this memory book never end!

He had stood it pretty well until today, but Christmas was different. He just couldn't go on. He must see Jeanie tonight. Surely she would listen to reason. No one could be entirely relentless during the season of gifts and giving. Jeanie, his Jeanie, the only girl in the world for him.

Memories of last Christmas were poignant. How they had planned this one. Their first Christmas together. They had even selected their little apartment and the exact corner for the Christmas tree. The apartment house was only a few blocks away. He would walk in that direction. Even if he were denied this deepest bliss, nothing should rob him of the fierce pleasure of tormenting himself with thoughts of what might have been.

Soon the house could be seen. Yes, there was his apartment. But

THE SCEPTRE

no holly wreaths were in the windows. There were not even curtains. Those three rooms were as empty as his life had become. He turned and walked slowly away.

What was the use of living? What was life anyway, when one was denied the only thing that mattered?

A red blur passed in front of him, a tinkling bell—another Salvation Army girl. No, it was the same one, hooded as before. She, too, stopped in front of the apartment house and gazed steadily at it. Why, she was looking at the same windows he had so reluctantly left. How peculiar. Perhaps here was more than one shattered romance.

Impulsively he turned and retraced his steps. The girl was still motionless. He watched her and as he did she raised her hands to her head. The hood fell and his pounding heart swelled with excitement. The girl standing there was the image of his Jean. It was Jeanie! But in such garb! And standing there with tears in her eyes. Was that the proud Jean who had turned so coldly from him last July. No—and yet, yes, for it was his Jean. But such a difference!

He was six steps from her. She turned and he took them in one.

“Jeanie, my darling. You do love me.”

“Love you!” she cried. “Oh, Tony! I’ve just learned what love is. I’ve worn this dress all day so I could just speak to you, and I had almost given up hope, when I saw you come down here and stare for so long at our little home.”

“Jeanie,” he answered, “Let’s see if that same minister still lives upstairs. We’ll surprise him with a Christmas visit.”

The snow still fell, now through gleaming lights. The whole world rejoiced, for it was Christmas night.

THE SCEPTRE

*I thought if you should do a wrong—
Whate'er it be,
The deed would kill the love I have—
And set me free.*

*But what you did can't kill my love.
It makes me mad
To think that now the thing you did,
Seems not so bad.*

—M. S. B.

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